

THE SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

GRAVESEND v. LUTON TOWN.

Played at Gravesend on Saturday. Result:—

Luton Town	2 goals.
Gravesend	2 goals.

The teams were as follow:—

Luton—Ord; Street and Lindsay; F. Hawkes, White, and Williams; Durrant, Blessington, Barker, Tierney, and Brown.

Gravesend—Hamilton; Tyler and Lockie; Parkinson, McAvoy, and Bigden; Mann, Pugh, Malden, Rickus, and Penney.

Referee, Mr. H. C. Platt.

Luton were responsible for another very good performance on Saturday, when they went to Gravesend and made a draw at two goals all. It was not quite as good as it ought to have been, for on the play they made out a very good claim to the two points, but unfortunately the goals were by no means so numerous as the opportunities of getting them.

There was not a very big crowd, the spectators numbering under a thousand, but few though they were they managed to get up a little enthusiasm at the outset, when the Shrimpers certainly had the best of matters. Right at the very start Ord had to punch away a centre from Mann, and immediately afterwards Penney made a good run, and Madden nearly scored with a shot, to which Roger had to concede a corner. A little later, White fouled Bigden when thirty yards out, and Ord had to kick away a well-placed shot by Lockie.

Luton then transferred the play to the other end, and Blessington, getting through, passed the ball forward to Brown, who scored, but was given offside, notwithstanding Luton's contention that the ball had touched one of the Gravesend men before Brown received it. Disappointed, but not disheartened, Luton went at it again, and Blessington secured an opening, but caused some amusement by skying the ball and sending it clean out of the ground.

After this, Gravesend took up the attack, and from a foul near the half-way line, Lockie kicked and the ball went to Williams, who rushed forward with good intentions, but instead of sending the ball up the field he skewed it over his head towards the Luton goal. Lindsay attempted to head it, and failed, and Mann centred. White should have cleared, but he let the ball go by, and Pugh had no difficulty in scraping it into the net.

Luton were very near meeting with another disaster the next minute. Madden, from a pass by Penney, having an absolutely open goal, but he failed badly. Madden made another attempt, but was fouled by Lindsay, and there were strong appeals for a penalty. A free kick only was given, however, and from this Luton cleared.

The visitors retaliated, and once more had very hard luck, Tierney having an open goal from a miskick by Lockie. As luck would have it, the ball from Lockie's miskick, bounced up and hit Tierney's hand, and the referee gave a free-kick, in spite of the fact that the handling appeared to be quite unintentional. The only other incident of note before the interval was a peculiar mishap to Williams, who was knocked clean off his feet by the ball, which caught him under the chin.

After changing over, Luton at once set to work to wipe off the deficit, and Tierney soon got in a grand shot, which Hamilton kicked away. The visitors kept up the pressure, and about twelve minutes from the interval, Barker, who had worked himself out on to the right wing, put in a centre which McAvoy, in trying to clear, landed over his head into goal, the ball striking the cross-bar and glancing off into the net.

Luton ought to have scored another goal almost directly, Tierney getting the ball right on to the goal-line, but by some means or other Hamilton frustrated the attempt, though how he did it remains a mystery to all except Tierney, who alleges that the custodian caught hold of his leg just as he was going to put on the final touch.

However, a second goal was not long in coming. Brown made a run down the wing, and put in a flying centre, which Hamilton had ample chance of clearing, but in trying to fist the ball, he only just touched it, and Blessington, who was standing about three yards out, scored with the greatest of ease.

Luton continued to have by far the better of the game, and the spectators had given up all hope of the homesters putting a different complexion on affairs. Then, with only about two minutes to go, Gravesend broke away on the right. Lindsay made a dash for Pugh, who transferred to Mann, and the latter, eluding Street, who rushed across, put in a shot from the goal-line, about midway between the goal and the corner-flag, and Luton had the mortification of seeing it sail past Ord at express speed. It was a shot which would not come off once in a hundred times, but it sufficed to rob Luton of the victory which seemed to be theirs.

The Luton defence was much stronger than that of Gravesend. Ord and Lindsay both performing well, and Street doing very fairly. Lindsay was easily the best back on the field, and the only thing that could be urged against him was that he used his weight a little too freely. The halves worked hard, and Blessington and Tierney were the pick of the forwards, neither Durrant nor Brown being quite up to form.

The fact that all the goals were of a more or less fluky character may perhaps be accounted for in some measure by the state of the ball, which was soft and out of shape. But possibly it was as good as Gravesend could afford. They are not a rich club, and I understand their whole expenses come within eleven pounds a week.

The tickets for the Millwall match, I believe, have been in pretty good demand, and I would remind readers that to-night (Thursday) is the last opportunity of obtaining them at 6d. The admission on Saturday will be 1s. The team has not yet been definitely fixed, but Lindsay's absence from the Watford match yesterday need cause no alarm. He was simply taking a rest in order to be perfectly fit. Let us hope that we shall see something like the old crowd and something like the old excitement. The kick-off will take place at 3.45.

Circulars have been issued for a general meeting to be held on Monday evening next at eight o'clock in the Town Hall, to consider the arrangements for the coming season. To keep enough men to form the backbone of the team it will be necessary to raise a fund of £200 and this will have to be guaranteed by April 15th. The character of the team for next season will therefore depend upon the attitude taken up by the supporters of the Club.